

VZCZCXRO8300  
OO RUEHCN RUEHGH  
DE RUEHIN #1284/01 1581043  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 071043Z JUN 07  
FM AIT TAIPEI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5557  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6885  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8708  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 8844  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1940  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0320  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 8140  
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 1147  
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 5908  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHHJJAA/JICPAC HONOLULU HI  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 001284

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: PRO-GREEN SCHOLARS ON DPP INFIGHTING, FRANK HSIEH,  
AND MA YING-JEOU

Classified By: AIT Director Stephen M. Young,  
Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: A group of pro-Green scholars told the Director on May 30 that resentment within the DPP against President Chen and the pro-Su Tseng-chang New Tide faction was an important reason for the victory of former Premier Frank Hsieh over Premier Su in the May 6 presidential primary. They also said that Hsieh had been boosted by legislators close to him, who had strongly counterattacked the KMT and its Chairman Ma Ying-jeou last year during the opposition's failed campaign to force President Chen to step down over corruption issues. Hsieh's considerable political skills allow him to appeal to both moderates and the Deep Green, they noted. On the other hand, the scholars criticized KMT presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou for failing to understand the feelings of the Taiwanese people, citing his choice of a late Qing Mainlander governor for role model as an example of his insensitivity. End Summary.

The DPP

-----

¶2. (C) The Director hosted a lunch on May 30 to discuss domestic politics with four pro-Green scholars: Hsu Yung-ming, Wu Nai-teh, and Michael Hsiao, all from Academia Sinica, and Tamkang University Professor Shih Cheng-feng. The scholars observed that the May 6 DPP presidential primary represented a loss for President Chen Shui-bian, who did little to veil his support for then-Premier Su Tseng-chang. It was also a defeat for the New Tide faction, which supported Premier Su. A major factor in Su's defeat was growing long-term resentment within the DPP against the pro-Su New Tide faction, the scholars agreed.

¶3. (C) Michael Hsiao said he was not sorry to see the losses of a number of New Tide "reformers" in the legislative primaries though he was disappointed that New Tide-ally Bikhim Hsiao had suffered defeat. Although New Tide members portrayed themselves as "reformers," they chose to publish their views in the pro-Blue rather than the pro-Green press, an indication they were more serious about enhancing their personal reputations than about reforming the party. Hsiao argued that former New Tide legislators Lin Cho-shui and Lee Wen-chung were especially hypocritical to run in this year's

Legislative Yuan (LY) primaries after having quit the LY just last fall as a matter of "principle," following the implication of President Chen in the corruption indictment against his wife.

14. (C) The DPP candidates who support Frank Hsieh have generally done well in the party's legislative primaries, the academics noted. At the same time when New Tide members were criticizing President Chen and the DPP last year, pro-Hsieh legislators were taking the lead in defense of the party against the "Red Shirt" "Depose President Chen" movement. Rather than trying to defend President Chen himself, however, their strategy was to counterattack strongly against the KMT, especially KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou. Though standing on the sidelines, Frank Hsieh was able to gain credit from the forceful stance of his legislators.

Frank Hsieh  
-----

15. (C) In Shih Cheng-feng's view, Hsieh and Su are moderates and "opportunists" rather than idealists or ideologues. Shih also described Hsieh as "cunning." Michael Hsiao observed how Frank Hsieh has a talent for using humor to deflect awkward questions from the media. When asked about the absence of the three defeated DPP presidential hopefuls at his campaign kickoff event, Hsieh quipped that he had been running late and had been afraid that he also could not make it. When asked why he joined the KMT when he was young, Hsieh joked, "I thought we were going to recover the Mainland." Hsieh also seeks to earn credit by creating the impression that he has made substantial personal sacrifices for the good of the party, for example, by agreeing to run for mayor in heavily pro-KMT Taipei City last December. Shih

TAIPEI 00001284 002 OF 002

stressed Hsieh's ability to win support from the Deep Green by cleverly staking out positions that he can characterize in different ways to appeal either to moderates or independence fundamentalists. While Hsieh's stance that Taiwan now has a "one-China constitution" sounds moderate, he also says the constitution needs to be changed, which sounds more radical, but then adds that it can only be changed when there is broad consensus, which again sounds moderate.

Ma Ying-jeou  
-----

16. (C) The four Green scholars argued that KMT presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou does not understand the feelings of the Taiwanese people. Ma's learning to speak Taiwanese is not enough. His adoption of the late Qing reform-minded Governor Liu Mingchuan as a role model is an example of Ma's insensitivity. Liu Mingchuan was a Mainlander sent by the government in Beijing to govern Taiwan, and is therefore not a suitable role model to appeal to ethnic Taiwanese who want to run their own affairs. The academics suggested that Ma's vulnerability on the Taipei mayoral special fund case stems not so much from the corruption issue per se but from Ma's past efforts to portray himself as a paragon of integrity above others, especially the DPP. Ma and the KMT also do not have good relations with Japan, the scholars pointed out. The KMT treats Japan as the "second enemy" because of the Japanese invasion of China in WW II, and Ma's trip to Japan last year went very poorly.

17. (C) Michael Hsiao suggested that KMT Chairman Wu Poh-hsiung, a Hakka, might be a good choice as Ma's running mate. Shih disagreed, saying putting Wu on the ticket would turn the election into a contest between a KMT Mainlander-Hakka coalition and the Taiwanese DPP. Shih cited the example of Luo Wen-chia, a Hakka DPP politician who lost to KMT Mainlander Chou Hsi-wei in the December 2005 election for Taipei County magistrate. At the time, Shih recalled, some Taiwanese residents had told him they were not interested in voting. This election was "not their battle,"

they had said, since it was a contest between Hakka and Mainlander.

¶8. (C) Wu Nai-teh suggested that Hsieh and Ma are both moderate and have similar positions on cross-Strait issues. The other Green scholars, however, said they expected Taiwan identity and cross-Strait relations to be major issues in the presidential campaign. Hsu Yung-ming added that the DPP will also stress the issue of recovering "ill-gotten" KMT party assets, the subject of a DPP initiated referendum drive.

Comment

-----

¶9. (C) Today's polarized politics seem more suited to Hsieh's warrior legislators than to the New Tide faction's moderate intellectuals. According to these pro-Green scholars and to many other contacts, Hsieh demonstrates remarkable acumen in his political strategy and tactics. Hsieh also seems very adept at working the grassroots. By contrast, Ma Ying-jeou's lack of connection with ordinary Taiwanese is becoming a cliché in Taiwan politics. For Ma, the difficult challenge will be to establish such a connection before the 2008 presidential election.  
YOUNG